



NEWS RELEASE

IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

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Governor Addresses the Water Board, Discusses Water Summit

Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter visited the Idaho Water Resource Board work session last week to discuss his ideas for his upcoming Water Summit. During the meeting he expressed how he would like to get the summit under way in a timely manner.

Otter is coordinating the water summit with the Board's Eastern Snake Plain Comprehensive Aquifer (ESPA) management planning effort. CDR Associates, a consulting firm, has been working with about 250 Idaho water users to craft recommendations to the Board on how to manage the underground aquifer.

"An awful lot depends on the outcome of this," Otter told the Board during the meeting.

"This is the first time an Idaho Governor has addressed a Water Board meeting in the 10 years I've been the lead staff person for the Board," said Hal Anderson administrator for the Idaho Department of Water Resources. "This shows the Governor's seriousness about developing meaningful solutions in the disputes between water users without involvement from the courts."

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On the same day of the Governor's visit, the Idaho Legislature's Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee approved \$557,000 to continue water measurement and technical studies of the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, as well as \$850,000 to continue the Board's comprehensive aquifer planning process.

The Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer is a Lake Erie sized underground water source that lies beneath 10,000 square miles of southern Idaho stretching from Ashton to King Hill. It contains more than 200 million-acre feet of water, which is enough to cover the entire state with 4 feet of water.

Over the next few days, the Board and the Governor's office will coordinate plans and assemble a strategy for the summit. The Board's planning effort for the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer will kick off sometime in mid April. Nominations are being solicited by the Board for an advisory committee to assist in the planning effort.

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